

Message Text

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63

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TO SECSTATE 7193

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGR, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: PRAVDA ON BREAD SHORTAGES IN USSR

REF: MOSCOW 2738; STATE 43786

1. PRAVDA BACK PAGE ARTICLE MARCH 14 DOWNPLAYS COMPLAINTS OF RURAL BREAD SHORTAGES IN TATAR ASSR AND TAMBOV OBLAST BY BLAMING PROBLEM ON POOR DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES TO RURAL AREAS. VILLAGE OF IZHEVKA, 700 POPULATION, IN ELABUZHSKIY RAYON, TATAR ASSR IS REPORTED TO RECEIVE BREAD ONCE A WEEK AND SOME WEEKS NOT AT ALL. VILLAGE OF OT' YASSY, TAMBOV OBLAST IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING ONLY RYE BREAD.

2. PRAVDA ARTICLE SAYS NOT A DAY GOES BY WITHOUT EDITORS RECEIVING LETTERS FROM VILLAGES REMOTE FROM RAYON CENTERS COMPLAINING OF " THE IRREGULAR SALE OF BREAD" AND ALSO SALT, MATCHES AND KEROSENE. (ADDITION OF THE LATTER ITEMS HELPS, OF COURSE, TO CAST THE BREAD SHORTAGE AS A DISTRIBUTION PROBLEM ALSO.) PRAVDA SAID EXAMINATION OF COMPLAINTS REVEALED THAT SHORTAGES CAUSED BY SUCH MISTAKES AS FAILURE TO RESERVE TRUCKS TO CARRY GOODS TO RURAL AREAS, OR BY SIMPLE MISPLACING OF ORDERS.

3. IN RELATED VEIN SOVIET SOURCE IN MOSCOW REPORTS FOOD SHORTAGES
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IN VLADIMIR OBLAST. EMBASSY TRAVELERS HOPE TO CHECK THIS RUMOR DURING TRIP TO VLADIMIR AND SUZDAL ON MARCH 17-18.

4. COMMENT: ASCRIBING BREAD SHORTAGES TO LOCAL DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS REPRESENTS APPARENT EFFORT TO DOWNPLAY SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION, IF BREAD SHORTAGE DOES IN FACT EXIST, AND TO DEFLECT CRITICISMS FROM VERY TOP WHICH WOULD RECEIVE BLAME, A- LA- KRUSH-CHEV, IF POPULATION NOT GUARANTEED ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF BREAD.
DUBS

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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